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The highlights of the past year

**Anthony Legge**

Sir James Spooner talks to the recently appointed Head of Opera

**Open Academy**

An exciting new initiative for a new era

# The Bulletin

**Royal  
Academy  
of  
Music**

**January 2005**

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Royal Academy Opera  
presented *The Magic  
Flute* in November 2004,

conducted by Sir Colin  
Davis and directed  
by John Copley.





► Welcome to The **Bulletin** — the second issue of the new-look Royal Academy of Music newsletter which aims to keep you up-to-date with developments in an increasingly varied and vibrant Academy scene. We're always interested to receive comments and proposals for articles — if you'd like to get involved, please get in touch!

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Contact us:

The Bulletin  
Royal Academy of Music  
Marylebone Road, London NW1 5HT  
Telephone 020 7873 7333  
Email [bulletin@ram.ac.uk](mailto:bulletin@ram.ac.uk)  
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## 2004 at the Academy

Left to right: Genius of the Violin: 'Soul of the Fiddle' concert. Foyle Menuhin Archive: manuscript and letter by Edward Elgar. Elton John and Academy performers at the Royal Albert Hall. Berio Sequenzas: Eliot Fisk, guitar.



This has been a bumper year for the Academy. A feast of festivals, major acquisitions, student successes, visiting celebrities, gala concerts, and an 'ordinary' diary of events which has been the broadest and most varied in recent history.

In March and April, the Academy was host and co-sponsor of the Genius of the Violin. This huge festival, which included concerts and events at the Barbican, South Bank Centre, Wigmore Hall, Ronnie Scott's and numerous other venues around London, was focussed on the Yehudi Menuhin International Competition for Young Violinists, which took place in the Duke's Hall with a distinguished jury including our own Erich Gruenberg and former Academy junior student Maxim Vengerov. At the same time, the Josefowitz Hall and the York Gate Collections housed the first

International Violin and Bow Making Competition, which was organised by the British Violin Making Association. This involved a 'marathon', during which eleven distinguished makers worked more or less round the clock to produce a copy of Menuhin's 'Lord Wilton' Guarneri del Gesù violin, loaned to the Academy for the Festival. Irvine Arditti then used the brand-new instrument to give the première of a work by György Kurtág, written specially for this occasion. So much else happened during the festival, perhaps best summarised by a participant's comment quoted in the June 2004 issue of *Strad* magazine: 'The feeling of walking into the Royal Academy of Music to learn bluegrass and folk fiddle is quite amazing.'

This was quickly followed by the Berio Festival, the latest in a long line of contemporary composer festivals organised by Manson Professor Paul Patterson. Paul and Amelia Friedman of the South Bank Centre had originally

planned the festival with Berio himself. When Berio died last year, it was decided to go ahead, but with an *Omaggio*. Perhaps the most memorable part of the festival was the series of masterclasses and concerts featuring the *Sequenzas*, with many of the performers for whom Berio wrote these notoriously demanding solo pieces playing alongside current Academy students: 'I wouldn't risk playing the harp in high heels myself, but they proved no impediment to Celine Saout', wrote the Times. The *Strad*'s reviewer wrote that the 'gripping performances' left her 'mentally exhausted but full of admiration for these awe-inspiring young players'.

With barely a pause for the Easter holiday, the Academy then launched into a Saint-Saëns Festival, the brain-child of Governing Body member Steven Isserlis, and involving the Barbican Centre and the Wigmore Hall. It was quite remarkable to hear a completely unknown work — the one-act opera



Leivu, why did you decide on London?

**I have lived in Romania all my life, well Transylvania actually, and I was looking for an opportunity to broaden my horizons, see a bit more of the world and study with some inspiring professors. Baroness Emma Nicholson heard me when I played in a concert in Bucharest — she is a member of the European Parliament and is the rapporteur for Romania, and suggested that I audition for the Academy.**

Are you still in touch with Baroness Nicholson?

**We meet quite frequently and she often makes time to attend my concerts. She is actually an alumna of the Academy. She helped me to secure funding which has enabled me to study here. I am extremely lucky because my parents could not help me at all. My mother earns about £100 a month, which is not very much in London terms.**

What a great opportunity. Your friends at home must be quite envious.

**Well, I have suggested to a few of them that they audition here as well and I am now studying with about four Romanian friends. They have all received scholarships. We are so grateful for the help and hope that this support can continue for others following behind us.**

So, what are your future plans?

**If I can, I would really like to work in the United Kingdom in a symphony orchestra, but realise that this is very difficult. I think I will have to see how the next couple of years go.**

Dan recently performed in the Duke's Hall with his viola, harp and flute trio for a 'free on Fridays' concert. In February he will be soloist with the Romanian Philharmonic Orchestra, performing *Harold in Italy* and Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*.

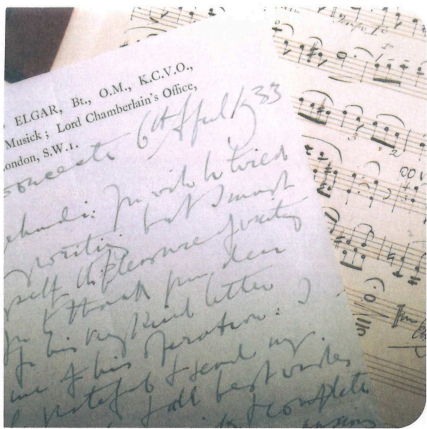


Bulletinterview

## Romanian talent receives helping hand

Leivu Cernat

Violist Leivu (known as Dan) is in his second year of the Academy's BMus undergraduate programme, studying with Yuko Inoue.



*La princess jaune* — by a major composer, preceded by a French farce, a non-musical piece of juvenilia, translated into English and directed by Simon Callow. In the summer, one of our most famous alumni toured with a symphony orchestra and choir of current Academy students, including gigs in New York with an orchestra which combined students from the Academy and The Juilliard School. 'Elton John has performed with some big names and at some big places. But never before had John appeared with a full symphony orchestra in North America, or at Radio City Music hall. On Tuesday night, he did both. John wowed the crowd, which was a little Metropolitan Opera and a little Madison Square Garden, with gigantic hits', wrote Associated Press. A gala performance at the Royal Albert Hall raised over £0.5million for the Academy's Elton John Scholarship Fund, which presented its first awards to current students in May.

Another highlight was the Academy's acquisition, with the help of a generous grant from the Foyle Foundation, of Yehudi Menuhin's paper-based archives — including his own performing editions, correspondence, and many manuscripts and early editions of great historical importance. Researchers at the Academy are sifting through many files of fascinating material in what is now known as the Foyle Menuhin Archive. They have already discovered music for Mendelssohn's early Violin Concerto of 1822 with annotations made by the violinist Ferdinand David, who worked closely with the composer on his more famous concerto of 1844 — giving valuable insights into this long-standing collaboration between performer and composer. There's also a rumour that they may have uncovered an unpublished work by Vivaldi.

Academy CDs released in 2004 included: a live recording of *The Cunning Little Vixen* conducted for Royal

Academy Opera in March 2003 by Sir Charles Mackerras ('it was difficult to believe the players were still students. A fine clutch of aspirant singers were all seemingly at ease... It was a terrific evening' — *The Stage*); Royal Academy of Music Symphonic Winds conducted by Keith Bragg, in Mozart, Beethoven and Strauss (the playing is so skilful, carried off with lightness and with a richness of ensemble... a recording as recommendable for its choice of repertoire as for its fine playing' — *Sunday Telegraph*); and an all-Birtwistle disc including the premiere recording of *17 Tate Riffs* ('it's very well played and persuasively shaped... this [recording] is well worth having' — *Gramophone*)

Rounding off the year's events, in late-November, was Royal Academy Opera's productions of *The Magic Flute*, which brought together conductor Sir Colin Davis and director John Copley, both of whom are at the very pinnacle of their respective fields.



# Academy People

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Pianist/composer **Daniel Abrams** (1958) premiered *Tristan's Promise*, his play about the interrelationship of two concert pianists and their manager, at Woodstock, NY in August 2004.

Recent appearances by **Giselle Allen** (1996) include the title roles in *Jenufa* and *Rusalka* at Opera North, *Musetta* and *Salome* in Dublin, concerts in Malaga and Brussels, and her debut as Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes* at the Komische Oper in Berlin.

**Michael Allis** (Senior Tutor in Postgraduate Studies) has written a book on 'Parry's Creative Process' (Ashgate, 2002).

**Craig Armstrong** (1981) released his new CD *Piano Works* in August 2004 — it immediately reached no.2 in the classical charts. He recently performed alongside Massive Attack in Bristol.

**Corrine Bailey** (2000) is third horn with Birmingham Royal Ballet.

**Katherine Baker** (1998) is principal flute of the Hallé Orchestra.

**Rachel Baldock** (2001) has won an Arts and Humanities Research Board Award to study for a PhD at the Academy.

**Emma Bell** (1998) will make her debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 2005, as Leonore in *Maskerade*. She is now an established recitalist for the BBC, Wigmore Hall, Brighton and Buxton Festivals.

**Emily Benyon** (1991) continues as principal flute, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

**Catherine Beynon** (1992) continues as principal harp, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg.

**Harrison Birtwistle** (1958) celebrated his 70th birthday in 2004 with features at Aldeburgh Cheltenham and Lucerne Festivals and South Bank Centre. Forthcoming premières include *The Io Passion*, co-commissioned by Aldeburgh Festival, Almeida Opera and Bregenz Festival, and *Night's Black Bird* for the Lucerne Festival.

**James Brett** (1997) composed all the music for the British TV hit series *Hex*.

**Gillian Budd** (2003) has appeared in *Les Misérables* at London's Palace Theatre.

**Ruth Byrchmore** (1991, Academic Tutor and Education Development Manager at the Academy) won the 2004 Royal Philharmonic Society Radio 3 Music Award for Education, for the Katerina Opera Project with Welsh National Opera.

**Colm Carey** (1994) was appointed Belfast City Organist in 2004.

**William Chen** (2001) gave solo concerts in Shanghai in September 2004 following the release of his popular CD of music by Howard Blake, *Lifecycle*.

**Chang Chiao-Ying** (2001) made her Carnegie Hall debut in October 2004.

**Steve Corley** (1997) has recently been appointed as musical director to Alison Moyet and toured this summer with Roland Gift of The Fine Young Cannibals.

**Colin Currie** (1998) premiered a percussion concerto by **Joe Duddell** (1999) with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra at the 2003 Proms, and is a professor at the Academy from September 2004.

**Nicholas Daniel** (1983) continues his busy schedule of playing and conducting, and in June 2004 presented his first season as Artistic Director of Leicester International Music Festival.

**John Dankworth** (1946) continues to perform regularly with Cleo Laine. Dates for 2005 include performances in Florida and throughout England.

**Iestyn Davies** (current student, counter-tenor) won Second Prize and the Audience Prize in the recent Handel Singing Competition 2004 as part of the London Handel Festival.

**Olivier Dumait** (2000) recently concluded a successful engagement with Opera de Lausanne.

Generation Artists Scheme and performed at festivals in Britain and abroad.

**Lesley Garrett's** (1979) new double-CD *The Best of Lesley Garrett*, was released by EMI Records in November 2004.

**Clive Gillingson** (cello, 1969), managing director of the London Symphony Orchestra from 1984, will become executive and artistic director of New York's Carnegie Hall in 2005.

**David Gordon-Shute** (1997) is principal tuba with Royal Ballet Sinfonia and continues to perform regularly with Ony Brass and major London orchestras.

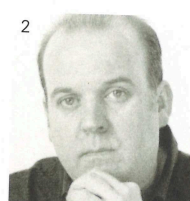
**David Gorton** (2004) has recently received his PhD and has been awarded a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship, allowing him to research 'Performing Musical Structures' at the Academy.

**Mary Hammond** (Head of Musical Theatre) is vocal coach for the new Billy Elliott musical, with music by Elton John.

**Ann Elkjar Hansen** (1999) won first prize in 10th International Kuhlau flute competition in November 2003.

**Lesley Hatfield** (1986) was appointed Leader of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in summer 2004.

Academy musicians have been shaping the profession for generations. We'd welcome your news for inclusion in the next Bulletin — please send it to the address on page 2.



**Richard Farnes** (1990), musical director of Opera North from August 2004, opened their autumn season with a new production of Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*.

Current student **Sofia Flodin** was awarded the David Kelly Oratorio Prize in the National Mozart Competition.

**Hadley (Robert) Fraser** (2002) has appeared in *Les Misérables* and *Pirates of Penzance* in London's West End.

**Amelia Freedman** (1964), who founded the Nash Ensemble at the Academy, presented their 40th-anniversary series at the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room in October 2004.

**Jonathan Freeman-Attwood** (Vice-Principal) has enjoyed a bumper year in the studio. As soloist, his disc for two trumpets with John Wallace — *The Trumpets that Time Forgot* — has received unanimous plaudits. As producer, he has won two back-to-back Gramophone Awards with Vivaldi's *La Stravaganza* with violinist Rachel Podger and, in October, a disc of five- and six-part music by Orlando Gibbons with Phantasm.

**The Galliard Wind Ensemble** (Kathryn Thomas, flute, 1995; Owen Dennis, flute, 1997; Katherine Spencer, clarinet, 1999; Helen Simons, bassoon, 1996; Richard Bayliss, horn, 1996) are members of BBC Radio 3's New

**Carl Herring** (2003) won the 2004 Ivor Mairants Guitar Award, administered by the Worshipful Company of Musicians. Current student **Stanislav Hvartchilov** won second prize.

From January 2005, **Richard Hickox** (1967) becomes musical director of Opera Australia, based at Sydney Opera House.

Violinist **Daniel Hope** (1995) masterminded *Forbidden Fruit*, a disc of works by Holocaust victims released by Nimbus, which he recorded with Philip Dukes (viola) and Paul Watkins (cello).

Pianist and composer **Philip Howard** (1998) won first prize in the International Gaudeamus Interpreters' Competition 2003 and has recently performed in festivals from Amsterdam to Oslo.

**Roy Howat** (Academy research fellow) recently published a new edition of the Debussy Preludes, which he performed at the Academy in Autumn 2004.

**Michael Huntriss** (1976) plays clarinet in Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

**Bart Jakubczak** (2002) performed widely in 2004, including solo recitals at the Spitalfields Festival and the Prague International Organ Festival.

**Sarah James** (2000) played solo sax for *Riverdance — The Show* on tour. Her recent solo recitals include the Bridgewater Hall, Purcell Room and live broadcasts on BBC Radio 3.

## Bulletinterview



## Love of opera leads to London

Joyce Moholoagae

Singers come from all over the world to study with Royal Academy Opera: from the USA, the Far East, and all over Europe. Joyce's home town is Johannesburg.

How long have you been at the Academy?

**I started with Royal Academy Opera last year. I performed in *School for Fathers*, just in a small part, and have taken part in several opera scenes here. I'll be Papagena in the Academy's *Magic Flute* at Klonter Opera in spring 2005. I've also appeared elsewhere, including recitals at the Royal Over-Seas League, St Martin's Piccadilly and at the composer Roger Quilter's former home in Norfolk, where I performed some of his songs. I've sung several times at the South African embassy, too.**

You're originally from Johannesburg — what made you decide to come here to study?

**Opera isn't part of South African culture the way it is here, so I needed to travel abroad. I visited the US as well as Europe, but the decision was made when I went to Dartington a few years ago and met Noelle Barker who is now my teacher here. When I started with her, I had the voice but needed to learn everything about opera, right from the very basics.**



Welsh soprano **Katherine Jenkins** (2002) attracted huge media interest with her first album, *Première*, which raced up the charts when it was released on Universal in April 2004. Her latest, *Second Nature*, was released in October.

**Barbara Jenkinson** (1976) completed an advanced pedagogical course at the Kodály Institute in Kecskemét, Hungary in May 2004.

In summer 2004, **Sir Elton John** (former Junior Exhibitioner) performed with the **Academy's Symphony Orchestra and Choir** at the Royal Albert Hall, Wembley Arena and Birmingham NEC, and at New York's Radio City with students from the Academy and The Juilliard School.

**Gillian Keith's** (1999) schedule this season includes *Iole (Hercules)* at Buxton, *Nanetta (Falstaff)* at ENO, the title role in Handel's *Deborah* with Tafelmusik in Toronto and concert appearances throughout Europe and America.

In 2005, **Professor Skaila Kanga** (1966), Head of Harp, will be Guest of Honour at Moscow's festival of the Russian Harpists' Association, and will tour American universities giving lecture-recitals.

Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic and the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

In March 2004, pianist **Julia Lazaridou-Elmaloglou** (1997) completed her PhD, on Mikis Theodorakis: symphonic work 1937–1960.

**Caroline Lenton-Ward** (1984) is running an education project encouraging singing in schools for the City of Westminster.

**Simon Lepper** (1998) was an official accompanist for this year's BBC Singer of the World in Cardiff.

**Elin Lewis** (2003) has recently appeared in *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Peter Pan* and *Jerry Springer*, the Opera in London's West End.

In the first few months of 2005, **Dame Felicity Lott** (1973) will perform in Paris (Théâtre du Chatelet), London (Queen Elizabeth Hall), Zurich, Lucerne, Warsaw, Dresden and Barcelona.

**Eliza Lumley** (1997) this year made her debut on Broadway in Tom Stoppard's *Jumpers*, and her debut in New York cabaret with *She Talks in Maths*.

**Joanna MacGregor** (1983) has recently performed MacMillan, Bach, Shostakovich and her own arrangements of

**Amos Miller** (1995) is principal trombone with Birmingham Royal Ballet, as well as performing with Onyx Brass.

**Ludovic Morlot** (2000) will conduct his first Boston Symphony Orchestra subscription concert in April 2005.

The prestigious 2004 Richard Lewis/Jean Shanks Award went to **Clara Mouriz** in her first year with Royal Academy Opera. The Brenda Webb Accompaniment Award was presented to postgraduate student Joseph Middleton.

**Tomoka Mukai** (1999) is second flute with BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

In 2004, **Simon Mulligan** (1995) performed in Seoul, Shanghai, Hong Kong and venues throughout the UK and US.

**Thibault Noally** (2004) won first prize in the UFAM International Violin Competition in Paris.

Future projects for **Michael Nyman** (1965) include a one-act prequel to Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, concertos for percussionist Colin Currie (1998) and toy piano player Margaret Leng Tan, and an opera based on *Tristram Shandy*.

Recent commissions from **Roxanna Panufnik** (1989) include works for

York Philharmonic with Riccardo Muti and Alan Gilbert. He is also music director of the St Louis Symphony.

In the past year, Academy research fellow **Peter Sheppard Skærved** (1989) has recorded all the Henze Concerti and premièred over 30 works for solo violin. Along with his long-term duo partner, Aaron Shorr, he founded an ensemble for new music in Ankara, and recorded a Beethoven sonata cycle.

**Ron Spigelman** (1989), music director for the Texas Chamber Orchestra and Ballet Arlington, has been appointed as the new music director/conductor of Springfield Symphony Orchestra.

**Andrew Sutton** (1994) is a member of the English Chamber Orchestra and the Orchestra of the English National Opera and plays regularly with the Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic and Royal Opera House orchestras.

**Marcus Tilt** (1995) is Assistant Music Director for *South Pacific* at London's National Theatre.

**Joeseoph Tong** (1995) and **Waka Hasegawa** (1998) won third prize at the Tokyo international Piano Duo Competition.

**Jean-Philippe Tremblay** (2000), as one of three participants in the 2004 International Conductors' Academy of the Allianz Cultural Foundation, worked with the London Philharmonic and Philharmonia Orchestras and their principal conductors, Christoph von Dohnányi and Kurt Masur.

**Guy de Villiers** (2002) has been music co-ordinator for *Phantom of the Opera: The Movie* and *The Woman in White*, and will orchestrate the original piano score of the 1921 silent film *Hound of the Baskervilles* for release next year by the British Film Institute.

**Ilan Volkov** (1996) is now assistant conductor with the Boston Symphony and Chief Conductor with BBC Scottish Symphony. He has also worked recently with the New York and London Philharmonic Orchestras.

**Christopher Warren-Green** (1975) makes return visits to conduct the BBC Concert Orchestra, Hong Kong Sinfonietta and the Philharmonia during the current season.

**Ashley Wass** (2001) plans to record the complete solo works and concertos of Arnold Bax for Naxos. His Denali Trio plans visits to the UK, a tour of the USA and recitals in Puerto Rico, Argentina, Germany and Spain.

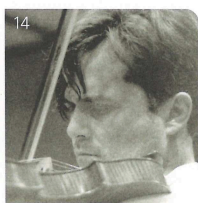
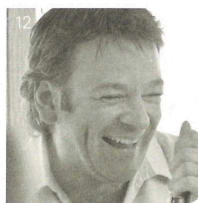
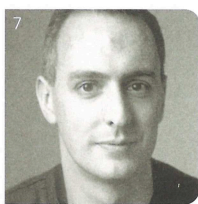
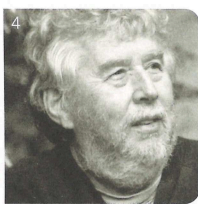
**Ian Watson** (2000) is now artistic director of Arcadia Players and regularly performs on keyboard and organ.

**William Whitehead** (1994, Academy professor of Academic Studies) won first prize in the Odense International Organ Competition in Denmark.

Current student **Thomas Wilson** has been appointed Assistant Organist at Westminster Cathedral.

**Elin Wyn Lewis** (2003) starred in *Jerry Springer — The Opera* at London's Cambridge Theatre.

So many recent musical theatre students are now on stage in the West End and beyond that we can't list them all here — see [www.ram.ac.uk/mth](http://www.ram.ac.uk/mth) for details.



- 1 Gisel Allen
- 2 Craig Armstrong
- 3 Emma Bell
- 4 Harrison Birtwistle  
photo: Hanya Chlala
- 5 Felicity Lott
- 6 Jonathan Freeman-Attwood
- 7 David Gorton
- 8 Richard Hickox
- 9 Joanna MacGregor  
photo: Peter Williams
- 10 Ludovic Morlot
- 11 Emily Beynon
- 12 Nick Daniel
- 13 Lesley Garrett  
©BMG Records
- 14 Peter Sheppard Skærved  
photo: Richard Bram

Guitar duo **Peter and Zoltan Katona** (1997) continue to perform internationally: in 2004 they visited Turkey, Germany, USA, Holland, Hungary, Bermuda and Australia.

**Jonathan Kelly** (1991) has been appointed Solo Oboe of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

**Freddy Kempf** (1999) attracted excellent reviews for his recording of Chopin Études, released on BIS in March 2004.

Current student **So-Yeon Kim** won both the piano section and the overall award in the Tunbridge Wells Young International Concert Artists Competition in July 2004.

Current student **Kevin Kyle** has performed in shows at the Royal Albert Hall, and recorded a programme for Channel 4 TV about the music of 1594.

Current student **Simone Lamsma** won Gold Medal in the Benjamin Britten International Violinists' Competition in August 2004.

**Elena Langer** (2004) is composer in association at the Almeida Theatre, where her chamber opera *The Girl of Sand* was premiered in July 2003 under conductor **Gerry Cornelius** (1993), with a cast including **Anna Dennis** (2003).

**Philip Langridge** (1963) has recently performed at the New York Met, the Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Florence as well as in concert with Berlin

traditional music, Piazzolla, Tom Waits, Leonard Cohen and Johnny Cash.

**Geraldine McGreevy** (1995) has recently appeared in Welsh National Opera productions of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Parsifal* and *Don Giovanni*, and in Peter Grimes for Frankfurt Opera. Plans include *Gerhilde (Die Walkure)* for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

The plans of baritone **Christopher Maltman** (1995) include Guglielmo (Munich, Seattle, Covent Garden), Tarquinius (Munich), Billy Budd (Turin) and Papageno (Glyndebourne).

**Andrew Manze** (1987) is Music Director of The English Concert, and is one of three hosts of BBC Radio 3's Early Music Show.

Organist **Matthew Martin** (2000) has been appointed Assistant Master of the Music at Westminster Cathedral.

**Nicholas Maw** (1958) is Professor of Composition at Peabody Conservatory. His Concert Suite from *Sophie's Choice* has recently been performed in Baltimore and Boston.

**James Maynard** (1999) is second trombone with the London Symphony Orchestra.

Cellist **Robin Michael** (2001) plays with many of London's contemporary music ensembles. He was principal cello in the BBC's Genius of Mozart TV series.

English National Ballet and a violin concerto for **Daniel Hope** (1995).

**Isabelle Perrin**, the Academy's newest visiting professor of harp, participated in European Harp Symposium in Lyon. She will return to the Academy in January 2005 for a recital-masterclass.

In early 2005, **Sir Simon Rattle's** (1974) performances with the Berlin Philharmonic include Mozart's Symphonies no 39, 40 and 41, Britten's *Peter Grimes* and Stravinsky's *The Firebird*.

**Catherine Rattray** (1997) is principal horn with Birmingham Royal Ballet.

**Augusta Read Thomas** (1989) is Composer-in-Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, who premiered her *Tangle* — 'a 20-minute musical thrill ride' (Chicago Tribune) — in March 2004.

In 2004, current student **John Reid** won the Gerald Moore Award for Piano Accompaniment and was joint winner of Birmingham Accompanist of the Year. He appears on the Academy's new Song Circle CD, *Songs of Spring*.

**Jean Rigby** (1981) returned to English National Opera this season to sing Meg Page in *Falstaff* and Ruth in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and in May 2005 goes to Barcelona's Liceu to sing Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

From 2006 **David Robertson** (1979) will share conducting duties at the New



How is life different here from in South Africa?

**Most things are different. It takes longer to get to know people here — I've learned that when someone asks 'how are you?', they probably don't want to know about everyone else in my family too! But I love living and studying at the centre of London, where there's so much music every day, and (you have to believe me) the public transport is much better here. I can't go home to my sisters and brother often at all, so I've built an alternative family**

**around my hall of residence, which has a real feeling of community.**

Do you find London expensive?

**Yes, everybody does. But I've been lucky to win scholarships covering my Academy fees and some of my living expenses, so as long as I'm careful I can afford what I need.**

Photo from Royal Academy Opera's production of *School for Fathers*.



# Open Academy

## What is Open Academy?

**JF-A:** Open Academy — not 'The' Open Academy(!) — is a major initiative (generating several courses, schemes and projects in Academy's overall educational mission) to take students outside the Marylebone Road site and get them communicating their varied and considerable talents in the widest of environments. Such skills are taught, or 'awakened', in a vibrant Music in Community course for all BMus students and a special concert option for postgraduates. Viewed from the outside, Open Academy is a chance to provide access for new audiences of all ages and to find potential students who would never have imagined studying here. Already, it has taken off in ways which none of us could have imagined. The kinds of *animateur* skills found in current students are quite extraordinary: they seem to realise — as my generation certainly didn't — that part-and-parcel of being a future professional musician is searching for a conscious means to inspire others, one which advocates creativity in the raw. There are huge benefits for everyone.

**RB:** That's becoming very obvious as we realise that Open Academy is not identified just by taught courses but also by our 'free on Fridays' concerts where new audiences pack the Duke's Hall for a terrific range of events — like children who've seen our students in workshops and want to come and watch them. Some of the students have a local fan club! Even more exciting is when we physically uproot and take the Academy 'on the road' with a series of Roadshows where students and staff collaborate with regional educators and turn up like a circus and 'pitch camp'.

## What do you do in a Roadshow?

**PS:** Well, for example, in June 2005 — perhaps in Camden — we are planning to involve literally hundreds of children in diverse workshops. Young people will discover music and derive confidence in their ability to contribute to something big. There will be 'concert' opportunities for all and a chance to rotate through many different workshops in the course of the day — perhaps responding to visual images, composing a pop song, and realising a combination of rhythmic patterns with many cultural roots and

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Vice-Principal, Professor Jonathan Freeman-Attwood, Education Development Manager, Ruth Byrchmore and Access and Partnerships Manager, Philip Sheppard talk with The Bulletin about some exciting prospects.



## Anthony Legge talks opera



Left and above: Royal Academy Opera's production of Haydn's *Il Mondo della Luna* in autumn 2003, and right: Wolf-Ferrari's *School for Fathers* from Spring 2004.



**JDS** You joined us in autumn 2003 after 14 years with English National Opera. What were your first impressions of the Royal Academy of Music?

**AL** I continue to be impressed by the achievements at the Academy; it is a thriving place, full of activity and immense talent. It is a vital centre of excellence. I often pass many top-class professionals on the stairs, who are arriving to teach the lucky students. I feel that every year that the standard of musicianship goes up.

**JDS** You were 14 years at ENO initially with that brilliant triumvirate, Jonas, Elder and Pountney. Can you tell us something of your musical career? Where did you first study?

**AL** I initially read music at Oxford University and also had the privilege of taking piano and German lessons at the Guildhall. I then went to the London Opera Centre (the predecessor of the National Opera Studio) and on finishing my studies



styles. Not only do our students get to practice what we teach them 'on-site', but the Roadshow allows us to fire up people's imaginations and maybe inspire future students.

#### Is that the ultimate mission of OA?

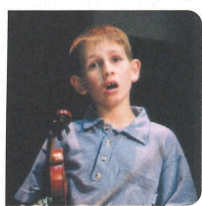
**RB:** Exposing as many people as possible to the wonders of music, including those who wouldn't have considered coming through our front door. Once we've got a decade under our belts — hopefully less — these audiences won't perceive any great gulf between the Academy past and present. One of our tasks is to isolate areas where educational activities unselfconsciously serve both the ends of a modern 21st-century conservatoire and the needs of a receptive public.

#### Give me some examples of what's been happening in the last year or so?

**PS:** One of the most successful projects to date was the 'Young Person's Guide to the Academy'. 30 students, aged 9 and 10, from three schools in Newham, were invited to spend a day at the Academy to experience student life.



Left and above: Open Academy Outreach days



Right: Junior Academy

They participated in a number of activities, including warm-up exercises that a Musical Theatre student might do, receiving basic piano tuition, learning movement and words of a pop song by an Academy student and taking part in composition workshops. The visit concluded with a 'free on Fridays' concert (the first concert that many of them had ever experienced). They even ate in the canteen as if they were undergraduates! The 'thank you' letters indicated that many wanted to come and learn music at the Academy and said it was the best time they'd ever had. These were genuine expressions of fulfilment.

#### But will we ever dispel the ivory tower image?

**JF-A:** It depends on what you think an ivory tower is. If it means that the Academy will continue to teach as a world-class institution and accept only the very best students from the UK and around the world, then yes, we are an ivory tower. But, we also want the Academy to be relevant to the music industry as it evolves — and to find talented students who have not had the advantages of traditional musical education. We know there are talented young people out there who don't think the Academy is for them. With roadshows and reliable tip-offs, we can provide that education to a number of such students. OK, only a few are likely to fulfil our current admission requirements in musical literacy. So, you change the criteria of admission (not the same as lowering it) in ways which enable us to detect where the musical talent really lies — perhaps through improvisation, ear-training and working in musical idioms which the 'candidate' is comfortable with. After all, this is how we already accept some of the best young singers and players,

on potential rather than merely how they fare with a figured bass. That said, when they get here they'd need to learn rigorously the generic language and syntax of music in order to realise their musical potential. All these sorts of skills, if honed, and with the desire to succeed, could bring an exciting new kind of student into the Academy.

#### What actually defines OA?

**RB:** Well, you've heard about 'free on Fridays', Music in Community, Roadshows, and Foundation programmes but everything starts with the programmes and teaching the skills which enable students to become *animateurs* — which, of course, is what MiC provides essentially. The programmes at the Academy are the life-blood of the institution, without which there would be just a list of *ad hoc* events. As well as this, we are expanding Open Academy into the York Gate Collections, the centre where facilities and objects interface with the learning and teaching environment. This fires imaginations so they can make connections with what they learnt in other parts of the process, whether we're dealing with Strad violins, manuscripts, pictures, or digitised images from the Academy's archives. Now, this extends into the world of e-learning and how we can get people involved in engaging with musical follow-up, distance-learning courses and professional development. Exciting plans are afoot for programmes and courses to allow students of music — both in and outside — to glean information, receive instruction and possibly even gain a qualification.

**PS:** As Jonathan mentioned, Roadshows can indeed identify students who have the ability and spark but who've never had the formal means to develop the

skills. You start by seeking the people who have the capacity to be at the forefront musically, rather than those who demonstrate technical excellence. The difference between this and the conventional audition procedure is that we would be looking to stimulate and expose this 'spark' for the first time — in areas where even the parents would have no idea that it exists. The aim is to offer initial exposure, hopefully implementing a support system immediately afterwards, especially through digitisation and e-learning facilities and our superb new Creative Technology Lab. The Young Person's Guide project showed that the Academy students who'd had training as *animateurs* could rise to the real-life challenge. One ideal for Open Academy is that Academy students will extend *their* curiosity through their new skills, and simultaneously we, the teachers, will be improving and extending *our* skills — so we'll all meet in an unknown territory. That could be the potent mix that leads the unsuspecting to an audition at a conservatoire.

**JF-A:** Open Academy also shows an openness to accept many idioms of musical style and our increasing connection with the industry. This is why we have, from 2005, a single undergraduate composition curriculum for classical and media composers. It's all part of the same thing because it's saying to a composer, you can follow all parts of your creative instincts and urges and you'll get work at the end of it. It may comprise as many as five key components: film writing, arranging backing music for a rock group, teaching, *animateur* work and composing for a string quartet commission: the modern portfolio career which is becoming quite the norm.

Formerly with English National Opera, Anthony Legge (right) joined the Academy as Head of Opera in the autumn of 2003. Sir James Spooner finds out how he's settling in.



there, I joined the staff. So, I only properly started learning my profession as an operatic coach when I was a postgraduate. From then on, I was lucky to work in numerous opera houses around the world and have worked with many wonderful singers.

**JDS** I imagine you have seen, like I have, huge changes in the opera scene in the UK in the last two or three decades. More opera companies, more opera festivals exist around the land. What are the prospects for our Royal Academy Opera students? How many do you have at any one time and for how long?

**AL** Yes, the opera scene has changed rapidly in recent years; the demands placed on singers are increasingly wide-ranging — you do not only need to be able to sing, but also to act and be physically fit enough to cope with challenging sets. At the Academy, we take between 8 and 16 students each year for a two-year programme. Their prospects are excellent because agents and opera administrators see them in

actual opera performances through our tableaux and opera productions. Anybody outside can hear that they have good voices, but it is only through these specific opportunities are the students able to demonstrate all the other skills necessary to succeed in the profession.

**JDS** Do you find you have to approach your students here in a different way to the singers at ENO and, if so, how?

**AL** I do not approach my students in any different way from working with professional singers — they need to experience what will happen in the real world.

**JDS** Your first production here, of Haydn's *Il Mondo della Luna* in autumn 2003, was clearly enjoyed by the audience. But what differences did you find in the process of putting on a production at the Academy, compared to the Coliseum?

**AL** An opera company has a huge support mechanism — stage management, costume makers, set makers, technical crew etc. At the Academy we have to import all these resources from outside and then build them into a team. At the end of the show they leave, and consequently it is very difficult to revive the production. The students have to learn to deal with new skills in working with this team. At the same time it was marvellous that we were able to choose a design team who produced those wonderful 'hightened' costumes which encouraged the students to walk with straight backs and elegance.

**JDS** Tell us something about your future plans for opera performances here.

**AL** We're currently looking forward to welcoming Sir Colin Davis back to conduct the final part of his Mozart series — *The Magic Flute* — in November 2004. That production will tour to Clonter Opera in spring 2005.

**JDS** What is your position on surtitles — sometimes a rather controversial subject?

**AL** It is vital for students to have the opportunity to sing in original languages — although we used English translations of *School of Fathers* (it was originally written in a Venetian dialect) and *The Magic Flute*. However helpful it is for the audience to have an indication of what is being sung; it is not necessary to have every word translated and it is also useful for the audience to still listen to the original language. Often the meaning does not emerge until the end of a sentence and

it is important for the singers' communication that the surtitle is not projected until then.

**JDS** An opera's gestation period is not very different from an elephant's. What time frame do you work to get it all lined up? Conductor, producer, designer, lighting designer, scenery and costume makers?

**AL** When we work with a very well-known conductor, such as Sir Colin Davis or Sir Charles Mackerras, then they will have been engaged some years before the production. However, nothing can happen production-wise until the director is engaged, since that person is responsible for choosing the rest of the design team. Once they have completed the set model and costume designs, usually about three months beforehand, then the technical crew, stage managers etc. can be engaged.

**JDS** What improvement would you ideally like to see physically at the Academy, vis-à-vis opera productions?

**AL** Opera singers need much more space to work in than instrumentalists, because they need to move around. As we saw particularly in the Haydn, things like costumes can also take up a lot of space. We are therefore currently trying to find more rehearsal space and also plan to improve the acoustics in the pit. I also hope that some time in the future our productions can be borrowed by other companies so our singers will have the opportunity to work elsewhere.



# A thank you to our supporters

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And others who wish to remain anonymous.



- 1 Elton John visited the Academy in May 2004 to present scholarships to the first Academy students who have been awarded Elton John Scholarships.
- 2 David Josefowitz and Princess Anne at the official opening of the Academy's new Recital Hall.
- 3 Portrait of Sir Arnold Bax by John Napper, donated by his wife Mrs Pauline Napper.
- 4 Lulu and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa at The Royal Albert Hall for Elton John's concert with Royal Academy students.



A grateful thank you also for gifts to the Collections Registrar:

Mrs Pauline Napper for a portrait in oils and a study in pencil of composer Sir Arnold Bax FRAM by her husband, the artist John Napper

Mr Trevor Wills, Executor for Winifred German, for a gift of manuscripts, photographs and other memorabilia and papers relating to Sir Edward German

Miss Sally Hain, niece of former professor Helen Gaskell FRAM, for her aunt's medals

Mrs Dorothy Cooper, for an autographed postcard portrait of Felix Swinstead and two musical quotations by him

Mrs Mary Dobson, wife of Michael Dobson FRAM, for an album of cuttings of musical interest and a programme from Buckingham Palace from 1868

Nina Finburgh ARAM and John McFadden Hon ARAM for their kind assistance with the conservation programme for paintings and drawings at the Academy

Mercer's Company for their contribution towards the conservation of the Portland stone busts formerly on the façade of the Queen's Hall

Mrs Elizabeth Lewis for scores and photographs relating to her husband, the tenor Richard Lewis FRAM

To the anonymous donor of the photograph of the London Violoncello School

To trumpet student Ciprian Ilie for the four large and attractive paintings which are now hanging in the lower classrooms in York Gate

Daphne Stevens for a portrait by Evan Wilson of her father, the late Denis Stevens Hon RAM

Sylvia Simon for a portrait of her late husband Peter Simon, which hangs in the Peter Simon room in York Gate

For the sculpted head of Patrick Savill, donated by his family.